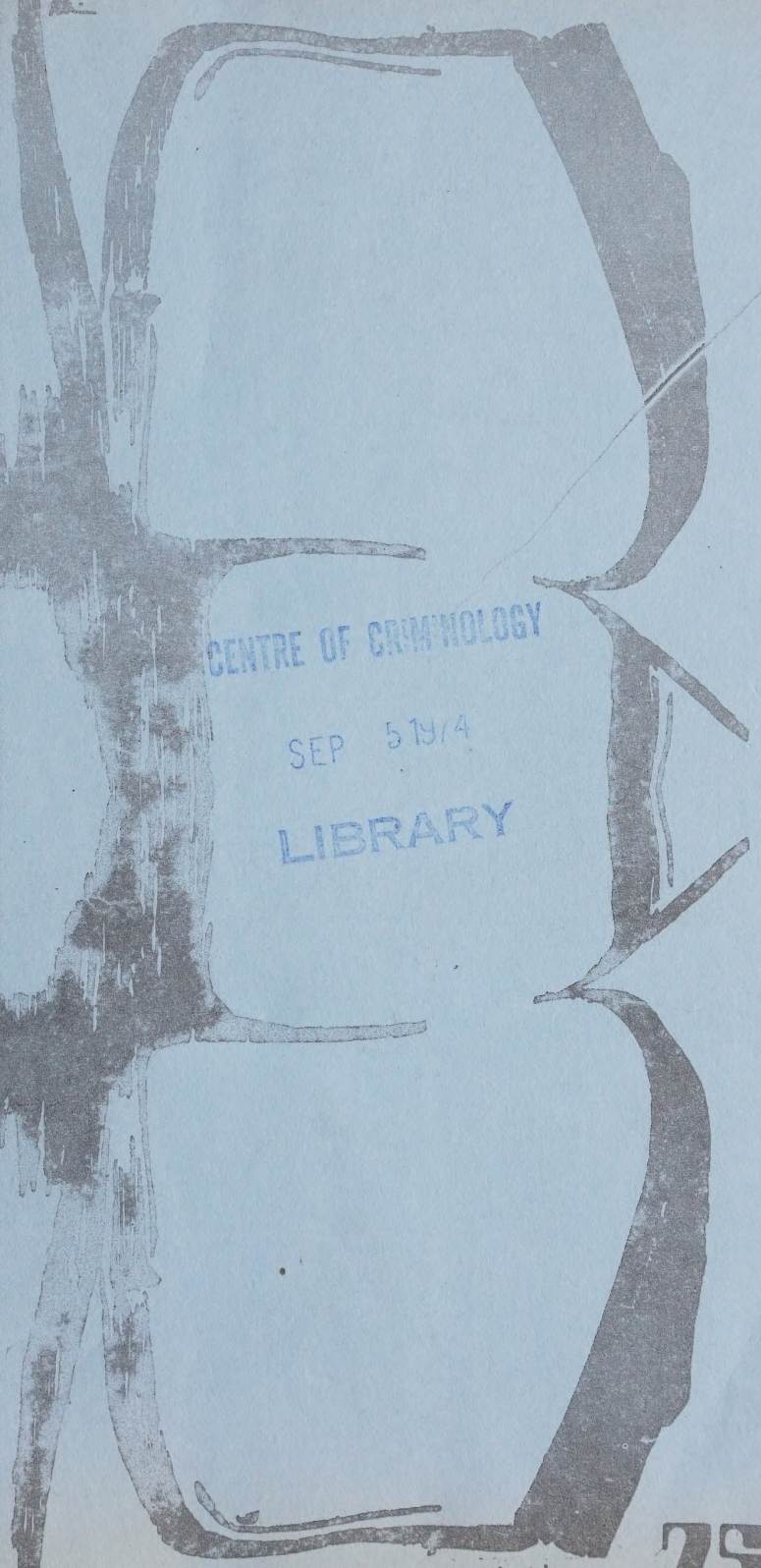
Prison Review



CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY
SEP 5 1974
LIBRARY

july 75 cents

THIS MONTH:

OUTERBRIDGE

On criminal justice

TRANSITION

Address: 410 2nd Avenue North,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Editor: Arthur Montague
Editorial Staff: R.A. White
Peter Cote
Inmates: Prince Albert
Drumheller
Matsqui
Stony Mountain
Dorchester
New Westminster
Agassiz

Cover Design: Ann Klein Nosen
Layout Design: Sheila Jones-Steele
Production: Jim Griffith
Business: Judith Green

TRANSITION is written and edited by inmates and ex-inmates of federal penitentiaries with ensured anonymity, if desired, and with complete editorial freedom.

All material in TRANSITION is copyrighted by its authors and is not to be reproduced in any form whatsoever without their permission.

TRANSITION is free to federal penitentiary inmates and ex-inmates.

Subscriptions are available at $6.00 per year, single copies at 75¢.

TRANSITION is published by the Transition Society

Second Class Mail Registration Number 3132

Vol. 2, No. 4 July, 1974.

TABLE of CONTENTS

Notes and Other Clutter ..... page four

Letters ..... page six

WILLIAM OUTERBRIDGE on CRIMINAL JUSTICE ..... page eight

Hacksaw ..... page eighteen

Millhaven as Paradise ..... page twenty-three

Legally Speaking .. by Al White ..... page twenty-seven

Organizing a Prisoners' Trade Union ..... page twenty-nine

Your Old Lady's Doing Your Time ..... page thirty-three

The Memoirs of Slow George ..... page thirty-six

NOTES & OTHER CLUTTER

Transition Society has three workers spending the summer evaluating the work of correctional agencies in Saskatchewan, with specific emphasis on the Saskatoon area. Most of the info will not be coming to us from the agencies themselves but from the people the agencies are "correcting". For the end of the summer we plan wide circulation of their findings. Anyone wishing input into the study should contact Diane Meger, c/o Transition.

* * *

Some interesting things are beginning to happen with respect to the civil liberties of guys who may go into the proposed CPS Buggery in Saskatoon, and similarly for guys already in existing RMC's. More on this in future issues.

People who frown at Transition's deficit budgetting and people who suspect that ex-con organizations are con shots and rip-offs should be discouraged to learn that recently the auditors went over our books and found that they balanced to the penny!

* * *

Next month's issue will contain a special insert about a national prisoners' trade union. As finances permit we hope to have the insert distributed to every con in every federal joint in the country. Watch for it! Save it!

* * *

Note our new address. The new phone number is 306-653-3980.

Letters

The Editor:

I recently visited the town of Prince Albert for the first time, and as an outsider to the town and the penitentiary, was mildly amused at some observations I made.

First, it struck me as strange that although the institution has been around so long, the municipality hasn't bothered to pave the road to it. With all the traffic it must bring, and the tax revenue that must come to the municipality from it, one wonders whether this reflects the attitude of the community towards the institution.

Second, driving along this dirt road, one sees a large sign telling of the construction of sports facilities. The amusing thing is that the sign identifies the Solicitor General as Lawrence Pennell, and the Minister of Public Works as George McIlraith. Now, both these men got those Cabinet appointments in July 1965, and McIlraith became Solicitor General in 1968, so the sign represents work begun no less than six years ago, and possibly as long as nine years ago. Has the job never been completed, or does somebody care so little that they haven't bothered to take the sign down?

Third, have you ever tried to telephone the institution? Naturally, one looks first in the directory under Government of Canada, Solicitor General's Department. There you find the Parole Service listed, complete with the name of the regional representative, but no penitentiary. It is nowhere to be found in the Government listing. Is the Government possibly ashamed? Try under "S" for Saskatchewan Penitentiary; not there either. Where is it hidden in the telephone directory? Under "P", listed in small type just like any private individual, is "Penitentiary, The". One wonders whether the phone company sends its monthly bill to Mr. T. Penitentiary.

Well, I know there are many anomalies and much foolishness in the system, but as an interested and concerned taxpayer, I thought it might be amusing to expose these trivial matters.

George Chillon
Winnipeg, Man.

OUTERBRIDGE On criminal justice

William R. Outerbridge was recently appointed Chairman of the National Parole Board. In a telephone conversation shortly after his appointment, Mr. Outerbridge told us he would expect to be held to the correctional philosophy and programs he has publicly advocated in the past.

In 1973 Mr. Outerbridge delivered the keynote address at the Canadian Corrections and Criminology Congress in Regina. He has given us permission to reprint his address in full in order that inmates can get a better idea of what we can expect from the National Parole Service as it is influenced by its new Chairman.

Because of its length the address will be printed in three consecutive instalments beginning here.

It requires only a superficial scanning of half-a-dozen daily newspapers to realize that all of us in the field of criminology and corrections are encountering real and growing difficulty in living up to the responsibilities of our profession. I am sure you are as conscious of the collective need for critical self-analysis as I am.

The problem is by no means confined to our field. Doctors, dentists and lawyers, among others, are also subjecting themselves to self-examination these days, with the result that standards of professional conduct are changing rapidly.

For us, however, the problem is not so simple. As I see it, the most important single cause of the controversy, unrest, dissatisfaction which surround corrections today is simply the fact that no consensus exists as to what the purposes of the system are and how those aims can be achieved.

There are too many crucial questions which remain unanswered; too many factors operating without regard for the other components in the system; there are too many unconsidered assumptions underlying our actions.

Do we, as the chairman of the National Parole Board suggests, send too many offenders to prison? Or do we, as the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police claims, make the qualifications for receiving parole too loose and too automatic, with the result that parolees present a hazard to society?

Is the country's prison rehabilitation program really a "monumental farce costing Canadian citizens millions of dollars annually", as the prison guards union alleges?

Is this country's parole system so characterized by overlapping jurisdiction and a multiplicity of technical provisions and procedures "that offenders, officials and the public have difficulty understanding the system", as the Canadian Criminology and Corrections Association stated in a recent brief to the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs?

Confusion and controversy surround and besiege criminology and corrections. We are the victim of attacks from outside the corrections field by both hawks and doves. At the same time, we are being undermined by dissension from within our own ranks.

At the centre of this controversy are a number of issues, some of which I propose to develop here. Although I will draw examples from various programs, this will be only for illustrative purpose since my aim is to encourage consideration of the principles and beliefs behind these programs. It is my contention that underlying every administrative or policy decision there are certain assumptions, about the nature of the phenomenon being studied. When, for example, we add a new crime to the Criminal Code we make a number of assumptions about the nature of the behaviour being proscribed; when we introduce new programs such as temporary absences, or living units in prisons, we make other assumptions about the behaviour of the offenders who are eligible. The assumptions which underlie our decisions often remain unrecognized

or unacknowledged, yet they have a tremendous impact upon what we do. In a system such as ours, which lacks consensus on what those values should be, it becomes immeasurably more difficult to complete the tasks assigned in an effective manner.

At this point it is necessary to stop and ask ourselves whether we do, in fact, have a SYSTEM of criminal justice in this country at the present time. Can the complex, multi-faceted and multi-jurisdictional combination of law enforcement, criminal justice justice and corrections agencies which determines society's treatment of offenders be called a system? Will this collection of agencies prove capable of coping with the problems of a society which is rapidly entering the post-industrial state? Can the criminal sanctions we have adopted, especially our prisons and penitentiaries, live up to their double-barrelled mandate of restraint and reform? Are there other models now emerging which will prove more effective? What type of planning can best serve this set of criminal justice agencies and how can these plans be best put into effect?

There can be no doubt that the evolution of a clear-cut and effective system of criminal justice is invaluable to a society. In order to provide the guidelines for human behaviour, law must be, as one author has described it, "knowable". If the ordinary citizen is to meet the requirements of this law, he must be able not only to understand the broad principles on which it rests but also to predict the way the law will apply to him personally.

In the late 1960's, the Canadian Committee in Corrections submitted what is now called the Ouimet Report. Its theme was the necessity for unity in the administration of Criminal Justice in Canada:

> "There must be a consistency of philosophy from the moment the offender has his first contact with the police to the time of his final discharge."
>
> "The Correctional Services must be seen as an integral part of the total system of Criminal Justice and should be consistent with and supportive of the aims of the law enforcement agencies and courts".

This Report reflects the notion of "the corrections process" which has been part of the rhetoric of criminal justice for many decades. In my opinion, it reflects an ideal which does not exist!

A more accurate description of the contemporary scene is contained in the first volume of the Prevost Report. This description, although referring specifically to Quebec, is equally applicable to the rest of Canada:

> "Various elements concerned with the administration of justice function and act as though there were no reason for any of them to consider themselves as part of a unified and co-ordinated system."

Our present agencies of law enforcement, administration of justice and corrections can best be described as a series of self-contained, adjacent compartments, through each of which the offender is passed in sequence. Each compartment is relatively independent of the one before and of the one after. Each regards itself as the fulcrum of the total set. Decisions are made by the personnel in each compartment. These decisions have a marked bearing upon the operations of the personnel in other compartments but are made without reference to them. As a matter of fact, some of the decisions made in one compartment appear to contradict the perceived function of those in other compartments. As a result, suspicion, misunderstanding and thinly veiled hostility frequently characterize relations between persons working at different stages of the "process". The result is that although the compartments are all devoted to feeding the offender through this process, the only person who sees it as a total system is the offender!

Police often complain about courts ---"their judgements are too lenient"; or the rules of evidence are so rigid that crime investigation is hamstrung. Many psychiatrists refuse to go into criminal trials --- it's just too hard to translate their perceptions of human behaviour into language acceptable in the court room. Institutional personnel and those who represent community-based programs compete for a larger share of the totally inadequate "correctional dollar". Within institutions, the conflict between custodians and those with behavioural science backgrounds is of such long standing that it has been accorded recognition as the "custody/treatment dichotomy". Judges and police seldom visit the prisons to which they send offenders; thus they have almost no realistic idea

about prisons and what they can be expected to achieve. Judges frequently express hostility toward parole boards which, they suggest, merely let out the persons that they put in. Correctional Administrators air their differences in ideologies before the press, departmental and legislative committees. Academics tend to denigrate laymen; professionals to dismiss those who do not possess their credentials.

To me, the test of any philosophy which preaches unity is its ability to encompass all these existing divergences of ideology, not merely areas of agreement. Can a philosophy of unity tolerate the degree of divergence now found in the field of the administration of criminal justice? Can it, for instance, reconcile such divergent practices as aggressive law enforcement, electronic eavesdropping, legal aid, the more extensive use of bail; plea bargaining, strict application of the rules of evidence during trial, enunciation of the "solemn moral condemnation" of the community by the judge at the point of conviction; and incarceration. Finally, can it countenance the release of someone on parole at the end of one-third of his sentence for reasons that speak less to the nature of the offence than to the definitions found in the Parole Act, namely that the inmate has "derived maximum benefit from imprisonment", that his rehabilitation "will be aided by the grant of parole" and that release on parole "would not constitute an undue risk to society"?

In his now classic article, written in 1958, entitled The Aims of the Criminal Law, Henry M. Hart faces the test head on:

"A penal code that reflected only a single basic principle would be a very bad one. Social purposes can never be single or simple or held unqualifiedly to the exclusion of all other social purposes; and efforts to make them so can result only in the sacrificing of other values which are also important. Examination of the purposes commonly suggested for the criminal law will show that each of them is complex and that none may be thought of as wholly excluding the others.

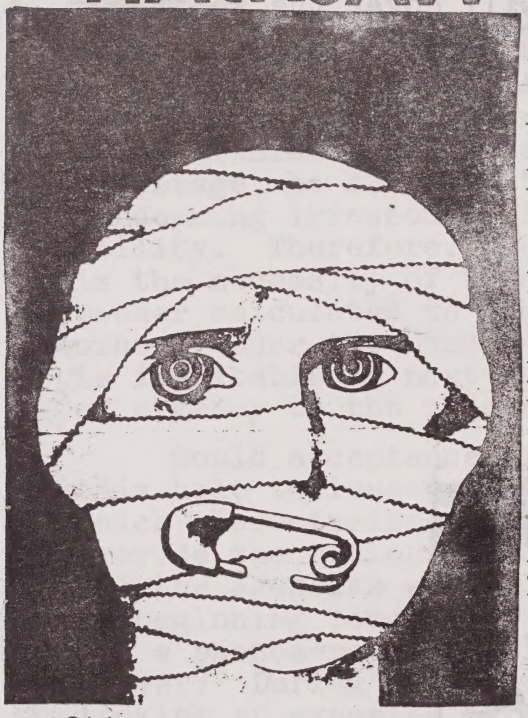
Suppose for example that the deterrence of offenders is taken to be the chief end. It will still be necessary to recognize that the rehabilitation of offenders, the disablement of offenders, the sharpening of the community's sense of right and wrong, and the satisfaction of the community sense of just retribution may all serve this end by contribution to an ultimate reduction in the number of crimes. Even socialized vengeance may be accorded a marginal role if it is understood as the provision of an orderly alternative to mob violence."

Professor Hart suggests that different purposes become dominant at different stages of the criminal law process. At the initial stage, detection and apprehension are dominant; during trial, blameworthiness and deterrence. At the sentencing stage, he suggests that the ultimate aim of condemning irresponsibility is training in responsibility. Therefore, the over-riding consideration is the necessity of treating the offender in a ... manner calculated to achieve this goal, especially since, under the Canadian system, eventual release is inevitable in most cases and lends a sense of urgency to the process.

Could acceptance of a common purpose such as this help to lessen the provincialism and alienation which characterize our present system? Could it provide the rationale to unite those who represent all the agencies within this system for the purpose of beginning long-range planning and coordination --- a phenomenon virtually non-existent in Canada as yet? During the next few days we will be looking at examples of programs which have involved this kind of planning --- planning which has taken place despite rather than because of a common purpose. Moreover, perhaps acceptance of an ideology such as this could serve as the starting point for defining what the realistic goals of the criminal justice system could be and how best they can be attained.

NEXT MONTH'S instalment will cover the subjects Treatment, and Crime and the Community.

HACKSAW



Prince Albert

The attrition rate for guys being paroled into the city of Prince Albert is so damn high it's getting scary. Research statistics have long-told us that the more exposure a guy gets to ... parole supervisors, police, and "public-spirited" citizens, the more likely his parole will be violated. Between this axiom, the mindless CPS-NPS war for jurisdiction over parolees, and Prince Albert's 50 years as a prison town, parolees are bucking very long odds to complete their paroles.

Ottawa

The CPS is hiring three "complaint investigators" to work with the ombudswoman. Could it be that the lady is finally being given some teeth? If so, let's hope it's not us she bites most often.

Prince Albert

In case anyone missed the news, an inmate here recently won a Crimes Compensation award of $2500 for injuries inflicted on him by another inmate. This is a landmark case; one everyone

should note. Word is that four more cases are pending in the Saskatchewan courts. Speaking of court cases, we hear an inmate is looking seriously at filing a suit against the CPS for failing to rehabilitate him in accordance with the Penitentiary Act. Maybe the time has come when the courts will start looking at the Penitentiary Act as more than a license to correctors to destroy people.

Here & There

Finally, Larry Harvey is in general population at Dorchester. Seg there won't be the same without him. Charlie Boomer is currently in Leavenworth. Wayne Carlson is in Lewisburg. Both these are federal joints.

Prince Albert

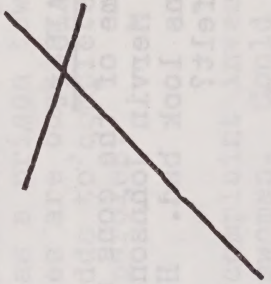
Some of the cons miffed at last month's item on Mervin Johnson. Seems they felt it made cons look bad. Have they wondered how Mervin felt?

Victoria

Everyone doing multi-years for heroin possession will be heartened to know that the provincial attorney general wants the Solicitor General to appeal the $500 fine and 2 years probation recently handed a millionaire user for 29 caps and some coke. Rather than give him more time, maybe they should look at giving the guys who aren't millionaires a little less time. Fat fucking chance!

as we have been to guard the city of Saskatoon....

----from the office of the CHIEF



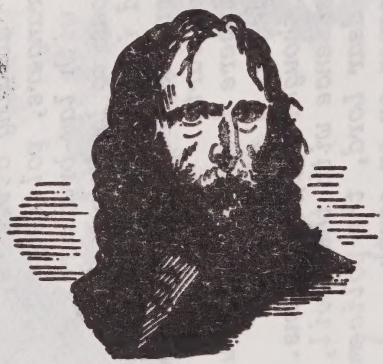
Dear Lord
who so successfully cleared God's premises of its undesirables,
look with kindly and professional eye on our earthly Force.
Give us cool heads, stout and courageous hearts,
an uncanny flair and an honest judgment.
Make us the terror of burglars,
the friends of children and law-abiding citizens,
kind to strangers, polite to bores,
strict with law-breakers,
and impervious to bribery.
In trouble and in riots
give us sheer muscles without temper,
at Police Courts
give us a sincere love for the truth,
and evidence,
without any thought of promotions.
From your experience with the devil,
You know, dear Lord, the policeman's lot,
whether in heaven or on earth,
is not always a happy one,
but Your sense of duty so surprised God,
and your hard knocks so surprised the Devil,
and your angelic self-control surprised both,
and so shall be our personal inspiration.

Make us loyal to the love of God,
as we are particular about the law of Canada,
and so, when we lay down our batons and our badges,
enroll us in your heavenly force,

where we shall ever be proud to guard the throne of Grace,

CHRIST in the 20th Century

WANTED



Jesus Christ

WANTED FOR SEDITION, CRIMINAL ANARCHY, VAGRANCY, AND CONSPIRING TO OVERTHORW THE ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT.

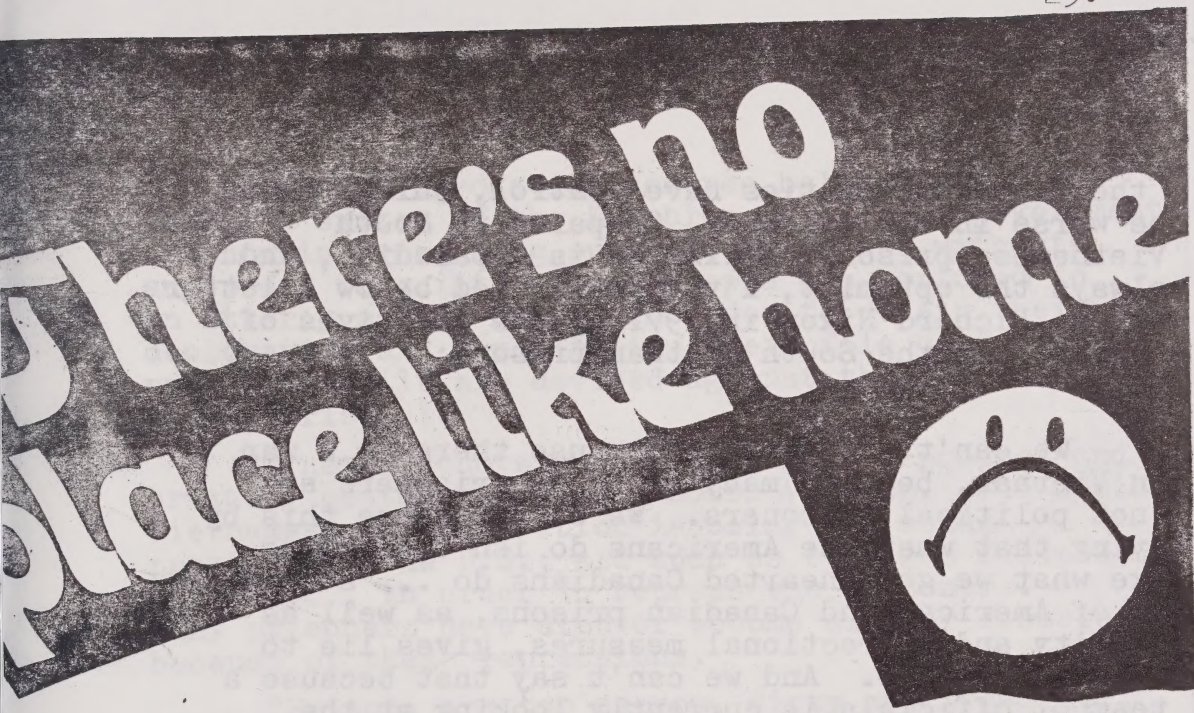
Dresses Poorly. Said To Be A Carpenter By Trade, Ill-nourished, Has Visionary Ideas, Associates With Common Working People, The Unemployed And Bums.

Alien—Believed to be a Jew

Alias— 'Prince of Peace' King of the Jews' 'Son of Man' Light of the World', etc., etc.

Professional Agitator

Red Beard, marks on Hands and Feet— The Result of Injuries Inflicted By an Angry Mob Led By Respectable Citizens and Legal Authorities.



millhaven

as paradise

People keep telling us that what is allegedly happening in Millhaven doesn't happen when civilized people, allegedly humane, are in control. The cons have no such illusions.

Not being one to complain, I wanted to let everybody know that when the civilized people of

the Western societies have control, things could be worse in the prisons. Compared to South Vietnamese prisons, Millhaven is a paradise, and always the optimist, I've transcribed below a letter sent to Richard Nixon in 1971 by the relatives of inmates in the South Vietnam prisons:

We can't excuse this because there is a war in Vietnam, because many of these prisoners are ... not political prisoners. We can't excuse this by saying that what the Americans do isn't anything like what we good-hearted Canadians do ... a comparison of American and Canadian prisons, as well as security and correctional measures, gives lie to such an excuse. And we can't say that because a team of officials is currently looking at the Millhaven situation, everything will be OK, because such practices have been looked at before and nothing done to change them.

And especially we can't say that only a small group of Millhaven guards is responsible because if the rest didn't condone it, it wouldn't be happening.

"Throughout South Vietnam, U.S. intelligence agencies have been participating in the incarceration of the Vietnamese and are using systematically all the refined and scientific methods of torture in order to extract forcefully declarations of guilt and thus encroach upon human dignities and oppose the Declaration of Human Rights. As a result many Vietnamese have become sick or disabled, died or secretly killed, the facts being hidden to the public through a curtain of secrecy.

"The interrogation centres belonging to the security system of the Republic of Vietnam government are now incarcerating suspects, arrested without any proof of guilt. These people are tortured in an utterly savage manner in order to obtain their declaration and constituting their file or false proofs of guilt are devised against them and sent to the tribunal.

"The prisoners are ill treated, repressed and brutally beaten throughout South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese administration is using the means provided by the U.S.; aid such as tear gas rockets, acid, etc., in order to repress the prisoners. Many prisoners have died or become sick or disabled because of these repressions.

"Prisons are too narrow, dirty and crowded, with not enough air to breath. In many prisons, typical of which are the tiger cages in Con Son, the prisoners are shackled day and night so that some of them have become paralysed. Presently your government is helping with money and other means in the construction of new tiger cages in Con Son. This has disturbed and angered us as well as the people of Vietnam.

"Communication between us and our relatives in prison has been limited to the minimum or forbidden completely. Many of us have been denied permission to visit our relatives or to receive letters from them. Our demands are being ignored by the government, sometimes we have been repressed.

"The food in prisons is too poor, composed mainly of rotten rice and bitter dry fish. Medicines are lacking. As a consequence, the majority of

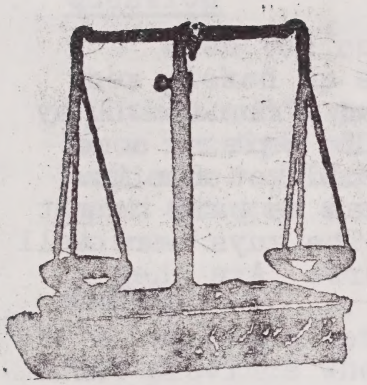
prisoners have lung disease, mental disease, paralysis or beri beri.

"Many people have been arrested and incarcerated for months or for years without trial or sentence or continued to be imprisoned under the regime of detention without any valid reason or they may be imprisoned or deported although they are under probation.

"There are people who are tortured or repressed to death and people who die of sickness in prison without their family being notified.

"We have been presenting to you the real happenings in the prisons throughout South Vietnam. From this presentation, you may refer to the prison regime in your country as well as in the other civilized countries in the world. You will see what your aid in human and material resources have contributed to the people of Vietnam.

"Presently most prisons in South Vietnam have advisors from your country and have received aid from U.S.A. If the material aids serve as a useful purpose, we will never forget your kindness and humanitarianism in helping us against poverty and backwardness. On the contrary, the prisons in South Vietnam being considered as inhuman, we wonder whether your effort and the effort of your administration provoke us in gratefulness or resentment?"



Legally Speaking

by AL WHITE

Question

At the time I was arrested I had about $300 on me and the police took it. They said it was stolen money and later the court ordered it paid back to the people they said I stole it from. This would have been alright with me if it was stolen money, but it so happens that the $300 was mine and I hadn't stolen it from the people they gave it to. Is there any way I can get my money back?

Answer

Eventhough the money wasn't the people's, the court ordered it paid to them and you can't get it back now.

Question

I had a guy I thought was my friend sell my car for me while was in here. He sent me some money and said it was all he could get for it. The car was worth a lot more than he said he got and so I think he screwed me. The guys here tell me I can't sue him in civil court. Are they right?

Answer

More information would be needed to give you a yes or no answer. Do you have a copy of the bill of sale? Do you know who he sold the car to? Try to find out the true price the car was sold for, if you can, and if there is a discrepancy you can sue your friend for the difference.

Question

If a bull is bothering me can I get a writ to keep him off my back?

Answer

Yes, you can get a writ to keep him off your back. The problem lies in whether you can prove your claim against him in court once you get there. If you think you will be able to, then a writ of prohibition or quo warranto will be sufficient.

Question

When the cops were investigating my beef, they picked up a lot of personal effects like clothes and a transistor radio. They never gave me a receipt and they never used the stuff as evidence. I wrote the police property department and got a story from them. What should I do now?

Answer

Write a letter to the Attorney General of the province where this stuff was confiscated. Tell him the problem and ask him to look into it for you. This usually works quite well.

Organizing A Prisoners' Trade Union

by Saskatoon Editorial Staff

Editor's Note: During the past few months we have been printing a series of articles to familiarize prison inmates with the idea of a prisoners' trade union, an organization which will have the legal recognition and the influence to bargain for the betterment of prison conditions on behalf of inmates collectively and which, more importantly, will be run by the inmates themselves -- not by ex-inmates or by charitable societies or by the Solicitor General. This article continues that series. Any inmate who wishes a full set of the articles can get it by dropping us a line.

This month's article is more analytical than those printed before.

What we're looking at here are three things: A) The current state of affairs for cons; B) The probable state of things if the cons alone managed to get a national trade union going; and C) The probable state of things if the cons had the backing of organized labour to put a national trade union together.

To start with we've simplified things by drawing up a chart showing some of the things a union will be available to provide and weighing them comparatively in each of the three areas ---using the above A, B, C.

Feature	A	B	C
Organized Power Base	no	doubtful	yes
Wage Bargaining	no	no	yes
Input into Vocational Training	no	no	yes
Seniority Protection	no	no	yes
Fringe Benefits	no	no	yes
Financial Strength	no	no	yes
Political Clout	no	no	yes
Nationwide Communication	no	no	yes
Nationwide Coordination	no	doubtful	yes
Legal Recognition	no	doubtful	yes

Trades Recognition by other Unions	little	no	yes
Civil Rights Encforcement	little	little	yes

A lot of cons will say, "to hell with the big unions", but the fact is that without their support, either individually or through the Canadian Labor Congress, chances of a union being formed and recognized are slim and chances of it being effective are damn near nil. Take it or leave it, the big unions are essential.

A couple of other points bear some scrutiny too. One: we're going to have a Liberal Government for the next four years. We can therefore expect many of the Solicitor General's pronouncements over the past few months to become reality for the cons during the upcoming Liberal reign. One of these is the federal minimum wage for cons. The implications of this are worth some consideration. Why a minimum wage for the cons who have journeyman or advanced apprenticeship papers? Why not parity with the street? Why not comparable seniority with the street? Our guess is that a prisoners' trade union will eventually have to be developed, not only to ask these questions but to make sure that the CPS comes up with the answers.

Number Two: The possibility of a tie-in to existing public service unions should be looked at. If the bulls and the cons could develop an alliance of some sort the bargaining power of both would increase considerably. As it now stands, the bull's union may try to block a prisoners' trade union. Already in British Columbia, the bull's union is bitching because some of the cons in the experimental wage programs are reported to be earning more than the line bulls.

PREVENT CRIME.....

Hire A Parolee

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

_____

Annual Subscriptions: $6.00 (12 issues)

Please remit Cheque or Money Order to:

Transition Society
410 2nd Ave. North
Saskatoon, Sask.

your old lady's doing your time

A STRUCTURE IN WHICH BOTH SEXES ARE TRAGICALLY TRAPPED

No mistake about the title; you can see it when you read their letters and you can feel it when you see their faces on visiting days.

It's a bad scene all the way around when a guy is doing time, but sometimes he forgets that it's rough on his old lady too.

He may be in a joint hundreds of miles away. She needs time off work if she wants to visit him, and too often she needs bread for hotel bills when she does visit. Maybe she needs train fare too. Add to this the hassle of packing kids along so that they can see Dad, if she has enough money.

Visiting isn't the only hassle, not even when you add in the mindfuck of her seeing her old man in the joint.

Probably a guy's old lady has to go on welfare when the guy is busted; especially if she has kids. Welfare isn't just one problem, it's a whole mess of problems. Suddenly she has to depend on half a dozen agencies just to get along. She has to know which can provide what; how much they are supposed to provide; what none of them are set up for or willing to provide; and she is totally dependant on them for as long as her old man is in the joint, unless she wants to start hooking or look for Joe Grinder. Even something like finding a babysitter can be a real headache.

In the last few years some of the women across the country, both cons' wives and women ex-inmates, have been realizing that they have a lot of common problems that they can clear up themselves if they get together. The range of activities they've gotten into go all the way from lobbying for prison reform as happened in Prince Albert awhile back to organizing car pools for visiting as happened in Ontario. Despite the several organized efforts that have been made by women, not much has gone out in the way of information that most of those who still suffer their problems alone can use. As a result, a lot of chicks, who might want to get a trip like this together, can't do it because they either don't know how or simply don't want to step out front and do it first.

Just about everyone knows that little groups can be a pain in the ass because one or two people usually get stuck with all the work. This is a traditional hazard; however, even when one or two people do have to carry the entire workload they still somehow manage to get a few things done that improve everyone's situation a little bit. Sometimes, though, the little group founders.

What's happening in Saskatchewan is a case in point. A Saskatoon-based organization, the Women Alone Society, which is into service work for women, has sponsored a summer-long effort to get cons' old ladies and women ex-inmates to work out some of these problems together. Results thusfar have been criminal (pardon the pun!).

Adeline Perry, the chick doing most of the work so far, has contacted the joints, talking both to the cons and the administrators, she's also contacted the community agencies and some of the women; and she's come up with zilch. On the basis of this, you'd think nobody had any of these hassles and that everything was really rosy. Well, everything isn't really rosy. Everything is about as messed up as can be, if only because the Women Alone efforts have got a lot of publicity and now if nothing happens, no one is going to make a move to try and get something together for years to come.

The problems are there, yet there too is a peculiar unwillingness to do anything about them. One wonders why. One wonders if maybe the approach is wrong. But then, when the women got together it would be their joint decisions which would determine the approaches, so the "wrong approach" really doesn't hold water as an excuse. Maybe in a lot of cases the old ladies are just like their cons; independant as hell---willing to have hassles just because having to sort them out alone is a statement to themselves of their own individuality. Maybe just the label, as a necessary justification for participation, is too heavy when one really doesn't have to go that route openly all the time. Maybe, maybe, maybe---lots of maybes.

But the one thing for sure is that these hassles will continue to bug the women, and, by extension, their old men until they get something together.

Maybe the cons themselves should step out and lay it on their old ladies; not only in Saskatchewan, but in every province.

SLOW GEORGE

I spent the last goddamn sixty days sitting in the digger. You may think this messes up my image, but it doesn't. It ain't a mark against my vast wisdom and it ain't a slur against my fantastic ability to manipulate them dumbass bulls. The deal was that I ran into a bull too dumb to even be manipulated. Sixty days for a brew is pretty heavy, 'specially when they got my brew before I could drink it.

I was gonna pack up my Advice to Inmates column anyway. I was getting too many letters from too many yo-yos who didn't have strings. It don't take all my infinidismal experience to predict that the RMC's will house the sane dudes like me and the forty-odd other joints'll house the bugs, cuz the bugs already got us sane dudes outnumbered. I mean, anybody who'd write me in the first place can't have much string to hold his head together.

I got thirty and thirty back-to-back. The second thirty was for the brew, and the first thirty was for suspicion of something --- they never did say what and they never did say whether it was for their suspicions of me or my suspicions of them. "None too swift, are you Slow George?" this young pup of a bull says to me on the way to the hole.

I ask you, what could I say? If they can't respect the dignity of age and the venerationableness of my vanity, how the hell talk to them sensibly, let alone answer them civilly. The whole trip got me very bugged, incidentally.

I wrote the Transition guys, my "super-contacts" who are all things to everyone ... and, it turns out, nothing to anyone ... because I figured the payoff for all these articles was due in the form of an instant writ or something to spring me back to population (before my other brew turned to vinegar).

So, what do those assholes in Saskatoon do? They send me a kite congratulating my for wangling my way into the hole so I can write a first-hand article about all my experiences there. They said I should keep a diary and take lots of pictures with the camera they "have every confidence" I smuggled in with me. Jesus, but they're idiots; after all, there's only so many things a guy has time to suitcase before they drag him out of his cell!

The old hole just ain't what it used to be. Used to be a thirty-bagger was like a holiday. You could get a little peace and quiet back then ---so far back I ain't even gonna say---but now it's noisier than being in population. Even some of the bulls like to chit-chat down there. I guess in this post-industrial Age of Alienation, as the campus cons call it, a lot more people are looking for friends ... but what the hell, bulls always have to look for friends cuz you can bet no one's looking for them. Enough about them in this piece, except this is the only hotel where the bell-hops expect conversation instead of cash for a tip.

Bulls in the hole aren't the only ones down there who babble. There was this rangy mother down the way who never shut up. Most of his rap was for describing the specific perversions of different bulls. I kept wondering howcum he knew so many of their hole cards ... maybe, I thought, he sat in on some of the same games.

Nope, the hole ain't what it used to be. The cells are the same size. No change there. You can't sing yourself to sleep with "Teardrops on my Pillow" anymore, though they're there. Now you sing "Teargas on my Blankets".

I won't say it didn't take a lotta getting used to. I still had some habits from the old days in the hole. I still walk real careful in the cell when it's dark because I used to always be kicking over my shit bucket. This was cool, but groping around at night for a bucket that ain't even there, when your bladder is a bomb looking for a place to blow, is a bummer. Modern plumbing, bah!

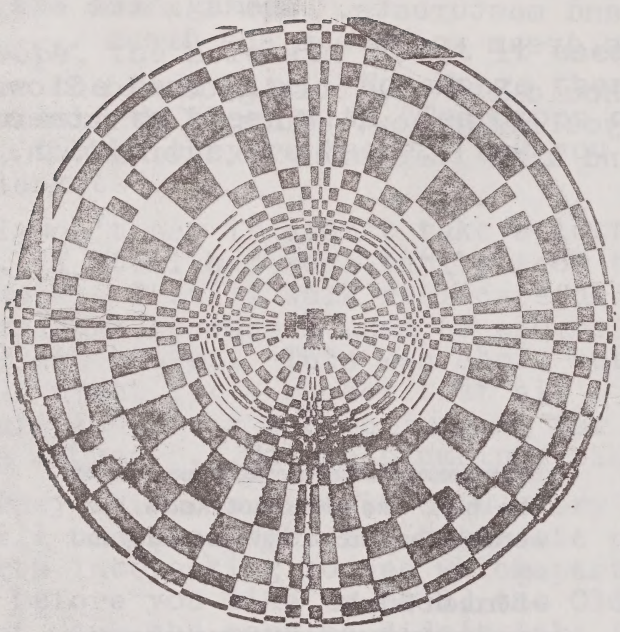
They still have a Bible in every cell and guys still use the pages for cigarette papers. It's sorta interesting to see which part of a Bible the guy before you like to read, the Old or the New Testament, cuz the part he didn't like is the part he smoked. I was a bit bugged cuz the last guy favored the New Testament. He'd smoked up nearly half of the Old. Myself, I sorta favor the Old. I like the stories about grizzled old dudes humping it across the desert on camels and tenting at the watering holes. I subscribe to travel mags so I can really get into those old guys camping out all the time. No Coleman stoves either!

The last guy had smoked the best part of my Bible, so I asked the bull for another one. He just looked at me funny and said, "if you've read one, you've read 'em all," and he walks off.

There's another change in the hole too. Used to be you could lay here day in and day out and dream and masturbate. Now I'm too old. All I can do is dream and dream and dream ....

I should lay a little good old Slow George wisdom on you right now. Nuts, I'd rather sit in the hole and kite this crud to Transition.

"To him who does not know the world is on fire, I have nothing to say."
--Bertholt Brecht



TRANSITION SOCIETY
410 - 2nd AVE. NORTH
SASKATOON, SASK.
PH. 653-3980

SECOND CLASS MAIL
REGISTRATION No. 3132

Librarian
Centre of Criminology
607-609 Spadina Ave.,
Toronto, Ont.